

Prayer Meeting

TOPIC--THE HELP OF THE SPIRIT.

Rom. 8: 26-27.

For Week Beginning March 14.

In no part of our Christian life can we afford to ignore the offices of the Holy Spirit. Every good deed, every holy affection, every righteous impulse, every pure motive, every experience of peace or joy, every aspiration after holiness, life and heaven; all the spiritual activities of our redeemed natures are the product of His in-dwelling. The Master, who said to His disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing," said also, "Nothing shall be impossible to you." And when He told them that He was going away, He re-assured them by saying, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also and greater works than these shall he do * * *. If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do * * *. And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." The teaching of this context is that there is no spiritual power apart from the Divine Agency, and that all needed spiritual power is bestowed by the Holy Ghost.

The words selected for our study have special reference to the Spirit's help in prayer. How wide a range prayer covers in the life of the Christian! Reverent meditation is prayer. Glowing zeal is prayer. Persevering effort is prayer. Patient endurance is prayer. A self-surrendered life is prayer. For these all are varied forms of the expression of our faith. A comprehensive promise is contained in the assurance that, "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, * * *. The Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Whenever the soul lifts its aspiration toward God it has the promise of the Spirit's help.

The text recognizes that which every true believer experiences, namely: because of infirmities we are not capable of clearly perceiving the things that are truly needful and that it is best for us to have. Left to the dictates of our infirm natures we do not "covet earnestly the best gifts." We are prone to want to "have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and to have the faith that can remove mountains, but the Spirit helps our infirmities and shows us "a more excellent way."

He is the Spirit of wisdom and reveals to us the relative value of things; the value of spiritual treasures as compared with material or temporal comforts; the needs of the soul as compared with bodily well-being; the importance of right relations to God as compared with coveted relations to the earth.

He is the Spirit of Truth. Worldly natures cannot receive Him. The truth which He communicates is spiritually discerned. He takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He teaches us all things and brings to our remembrance whatsoever Christ has spoken unto us. He illumines our Lord's entire redemptive work so that we perceive its meaning and value, and receive it into our lives.

He is the Spirit of Life, of whom we are born again, by whom our vitality is continued and nourished; our conscious spiritual life is dependent on His sustaining energy and His assurance. He bears witness with our spirits that we are God's children.

He is the Spirit of Power. His disciples were able to testify effectually after the Holy Ghost came on them at Pentecost. Their fears were dissipated and they faced the unsympathetic multitude without a tremor. They spoke with such power that thousands were convicted and said, "Men

and brethren, what shall we do?" These same disciples, who, before, had fled with fear, now went everywhere, preaching the Word, the Lord, by His spirit, working with them.

He is the Spirit of Holiness, without which no man can have communion with God. Our natures must be kindred to His if we are to have converse with Him in prayer. He cleanses our hearts with the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Well may be plead, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

Young People's Society

THE WICKET GATE.

Topic for Sunday, March 21—Pilgrim's Progress Series. III. The Wicket Gate. Matthew 7: 7-14.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: Hindrances in the way. Luke 14: 25-35.

Tuesday: The Christ door. John 10: 7-16.

Wednesday: The door of faith. Ephesians 2: 18-22.

Thursday: An open door. Revelation 3: 7-11.

Friday: The door of love. 1 John 3: 14-19.

Saturday: The need of perseverance. Luke 9: 57-62.

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

A door is nothing to us unless we use it. Even an open door is meaningless, so far as we are concerned, if we do not pass through it.

The door is the way to something different from that which we have experienced outside. It opens to a new life and here to an infinitely better life.

The latch must be lifted even to an unlocked door. That latch is towards the outside, where it may be reached. God forces no one to accept Christ. "If any man will," is the law.

The door stands for more than openness or a way. It expresses an opportunity. Confronting the sinner it tells him what he may do and silently calls to him to enter in and enjoy and possess.

The door stands for what is within. Opened it is an invitation. It says, "What is here is yours." It places the house at the disposal of the guest. Its warmth, its welcome, its good cheer, its protection, its beauty, all are his.

The attempt to enter the house by any other way than the door is the act of a thief and robber. By it one puts contempt upon the door and that for which it stands. To seek heaven by any other means than Christ is to put contempt upon God's way of life.

It is common to seek salvation by some other way than Christ. The surrender of the soul to him is the last thing the heart wishes to make. The cross, the blood, the sacrifice, are Abel ways of life, and the Cain spirit wishes to appease God in some other way.

The "wicket gate" stands for decision. To use it means that one is willing to be put in the right way, to go where "Evangelist" will tell him the story of the cross and of the provision made for every one who will accept. "I will go in unto the king; and if I perish, I perish."

"Goodwill" stands at the door, an ever ready attendant, to let us in. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." Narrow as the door may look it lets us into the way of eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

But nothing is more real than what is spiritual, as approaching nearest to the nature of all reality—namely, God Himself.—Thomas Boston.